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*The vision of New Haven's children
is our city's greatest resource.**

Lt. Rebecca Sweeney Burns
New Haven Police Department

Proposed H.B. No. 5588 AN ACT CONCERNING ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

Planning and Development Committee

February 14, 2011

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile and members of the committee my name is Rebecca Sweeney- Burns. I am a Lieutenant in the New Haven Police Department and the District Manager for the Downtown and Wooster Square police district.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Proposed House Bill 5588, ***AN ACT CONCERNING ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS.***

Over the last 15 years, downtown New Haven has gone through a renaissance, College Street and Crown Street, once resembled a ghost town. Today, these streets are filled with clubs and restaurants. Older buildings have been converted to condominiums and apartments.

Every weekend, thousands of people from New Haven, our local universities and surrounding communities patronize our thriving downtown entertainment district.

The city budgets about \$200,000 a year for police to patrol the district. In addition to the police department, the Fire Marshall and health department, at various times, patrol the district.

While bars and clubs often hire extra duty police officers for additional security inside the club the city's resources are stretched thin.

Hiring extra duty police officers to provide security inside the clubs is not enough. Often times, the clubs eject troublemakers, who take their arguments onto the street. That's what happened in August, when a man was shot to death in a Crown Street parking lot. He and the three men charged in the killing had just been ejected from the nightclub across street.

This past October, as the bars were letting out, a shootout involving police occurred at the

intersection of Crown and College Street. Dinners ducked as bullets shattered windows at Pacifico, a popular downtown restaurant, and the Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School.

The value of a dedicated, adequately staffed police bar detail with consistent leadership cannot be overstated.

The resources it requires to provide adequate policing for the bars and clubs are not covered by the taxes that these bars and clubs pay.

A more fair method to pay for downtown policing services would be to amend the general statutes to provide that when more than ten establishments are located within a square mile and such establishments (1) hold liquor licenses and have a combined legal occupancy of more than two thousand people, or (2) are regularly open and serving alcohol within two hours of the legal closing time, a municipality may place such establishments in an "entertainment district" and may charge such establishments a levy based on (A) legal occupancy; (B) square footage; or (C) alcohol sales, and to further provide that such levy shall be used for enhanced police protection in such entertainment district.

Thank you for your time.